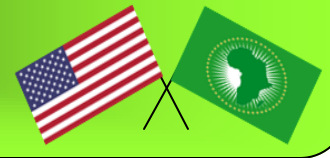


# THE USAU YOUTH



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## *RIO+20: THE FUTURE WE WANT FOR AFRICAN YOUTH*

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was held in Brazil from **June 20-22, 2012**, to mark the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the 10th anniversary of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). At this historical event, world leaders, along with thousands of participants from governments, the private sector, NGOs and other groups, came together to contribute to the discussion on how countries and their citizens could reduce poverty, advance social equity, and ensure environmental protection on an increasingly crowded planet, assuring the future we want.

*"Sustainable development is about the future,"* as defined by the Brundtland Report, also commonly referred to as *Our Common Future*. The Brundtland Report states that sustainable development is *"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

Africa's future rest on her large youth population who, when given the necessary skills and opportunity to participate, can provide solutions and contribute to efforts toward achieving development goals in local and national arenas.



**Esther Agbarakwe – Nigeria (right) and Awa Innocent – Cameroon (left), were among the few African youth representatives at the UN Rio+20 Conference in Rio de Janeiro.**

Many African youth joined their peers at Rio+20 as they saw the conference as an opportunity to contribute to defining the future they want for Africa. Rio+20 also provided an opportunity to be part of a discussion that was previously only limited to those with access. Rio+20 allowed African youth the chance to become engaged throughout the process.

## EDITORIAL NOTE

Dear readers,

Welcome to this month's issue of the *The USAU Youth*. In November, we open with the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, which focuses on how African youth can work to ensure that their governments are continuing development projects *"that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."* Read more about it in the article entitled '*Rio+20: The Future We Want for African Youth*.' Page 3 has an awe-inspiring *Unsung Youth Hero* from Zimbabwe, Precious Simba, who founded an NGO to help address the ongoing issue of keeping the youth in school within her community. On page 10, Lawrence Muli will provide this month's *Voice of Volunteers*, as he discusses how his work at the AU has helped him align his career goals with his father's rich legacy of public service and environmental conservation. In our *Word to the Wise* section, we had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Gregory W. Engle, Peace Corps Country Director in Ethiopia, about his views on the impact of the Peace Corps program on youth in Africa. It makes for an interesting read on page 7.

As always, please share your thoughts with us on Twitter and Facebook.

Dear readers, you are on the verge of some terrific articles ... please, read on.

**Lina Mohammed/Jasmine White**  
USAU Public Diplomacy Team

As members of a shared continent, African youth began to prepare for this historical conference in October 2011 at the African Economic Conference (AEC) and African Regional Preparatory Meeting on Rio+20 held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At these meetings, I was joined by many youth who demonstrated their passion for sustainable development by organizing side events and engaging their governments. We were also joined by international NGO and Civil Society organizations. African youth actively participated at this event, mostly through the Youth and Children Major Group of the UN Conference for Sustainable Development (CSD). Despite the hard work of many young Africans, by the end of 2011 approached, the participation of youth in the overall process began to diminish, as there were few youth-led activity on Rio+20. In fact, RIO+20 related events were held only in Kenya, Nigeria, and Cameroon.

While in Rio de Janeiro last June, we saw, with some great disappointment, that many African governments did not support their youth representatives in their aspirations to attend the conference and participate in shaping the future. For those who did manage to attend, their capacity to engage was low when compared to their peers from the global north; yet, we did our best to lobby and engage our governments on the issues most close to our heart - youth unemployment and comprehensive health care, including reproductive health. We believed that Rio+20 gave us, as African youth, a stronger belief in ourselves and our ability to fight harder for the future we want; a future full of new and different approaches to support efforts for a more sustainable world.

As a reproductive rights activist, I was sad that a dialogue on reproductive rights was excluded from the outcome document, despite the fact that some governments had initially supported reproductive rights

at the UN Commission on Population and Development meeting held in May 2012. There, they agreed on a landmark resolution to protect and support the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents and youth. It was heartbreaking to see governments go back on this commitment. As many African youth are entering into their reproductive age, they need correct information on their sexual and reproductive health and deserve the right to make informed decisions about their sexuality, even whether or when to have children. The exclusion of this discussion means that these youth may not have free and easy access to information about having a safe sex life.

African youth have the experience and passion to help shape a better and sustainable future for Africa. They only need the opportunity. We are now looking forward to engaging in the 2012 post development agenda and high-level political forum on sustainable development, which Rio+20 created.

**Esther Agbarakwe**

**Head of the Nigerian Youth Climate Coalition**

**Fellow, Atlas Corps International Advocacy**

**Washington D.C.**

## Esrael Belema's Babies Controlling Security System

In the first edition of our newsletter, in January 2012, we featured Ethiopia's unsung youth hero - Esrael Belema, whose fascination for technology led him to improve the telecommunication system in his rural town of Ginchi. Today, Esrael is back with something new - the Babies Controlling Security System.

According to Esrael, the world has greatly benefitted from facilities that have come along with the growth of technology. However, technology has also assisted in increasing and complicating the threats to human

life. Physical security is no longer enough to ensure the safety of people, therefore there is a need to advance the ways of securing human life and property. His “Babies Controlling Security System” will greatly help to reduce the issue of child abduction. In Ethiopia, a country with a population of about 93 million and a poverty rate of about 38.9%, these factors have contributed to the increasing insecurity of children in Ethiopia.

This product, which is integrated into mobile phones and has a hidden camera, can be installed anywhere – in cars, bedrooms, etc. When suspicious acts are detected, the system captures the sound and picture at the scene and immediately alerts the owner through a phone call.

To learn more about Esrael’s “Babies Controlling Security System” and perhaps help make the system available to more people in Africa and around the globe, you can contact Esrael Belema directly at [esraeltec@yahoo.com](mailto:esraeltec@yahoo.com).

**Bari Fanso**

**2011 -2012 African Union Youth Volunteer**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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## MONTHLY PROVERB

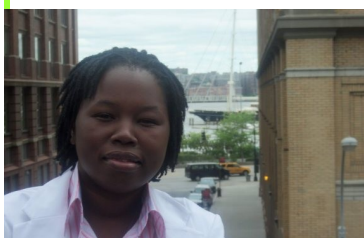


**“Until the lions start writing down their own stories, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter.”** Southern African proverb

This proverb depicts that there is always two sides to every story.

## UNSUNG YOUTH HERO

Precious Simba: The Fighter for Girls and Women Emancipation



Precious Simba is a young Zimbabwean and is the Founder and Program Director of an NGO known as the Girls Development Initiative (GDI).

Precious created her organization in March 2011, after she was se-

lected as one of ten African participants in the annual Fortune/U.S. State Department Global Women’s Mentoring Program; a program that connects talented emerging women leaders, between the ages of 25 to 43, from all over the world with Fortune’s most powerful women leaders for a month-long internship program.

It was after attending this program that Precious understood she needed to do something to alleviate some of the pressures that young girls in her country were facing, as well as address the plight of girls and women in her part of Africa. In Zimbabwe, research has shown that while young girls have a 91% chance of getting into primary school, they only have a 39% chance of progressing to secondary school. As such, the dropout rate for girls is much higher than that

for boys. The problem is further compounded by human trafficking syndicates that prey on young girls with promises of giving them better jobs in South Africa.

Although GDI is still a young initiative, it is already reaching out to over 200 students every week and has a group of 100 girls from disadvantaged backgrounds whom they are assisting with staying in school. GDI hopes to impact the lives of at least 10,000 young students by the end of 2012.

In their long range plans, the organization is looking into setting up project support initiatives to finance budding female entrepreneurs as well as set up internet centers to ensure that young people gain access to information.

To learn more about Precious Simba and her organization, kindly visit the following link:

<http://africansonthemove.wordpress.com/>

DISCLAIMER: The above information has been obtained from Africans on the Move.

**Bari Fanso**

**2011 -2012 African Union Youth Volunteer**

### November Sudoku Puzzle

		9						
3	1	2		8			4	
			4	9		8	2	
			1	2		6	9	
	6	1		7	4			2
	9	7		3	2			
	2			4		1	3	8
						2		

### Answers for October Puzzle

3	6	1	8	5	7	4	9	2
7	4	2	3	9	6	8	1	5
8	9	5	2	1	4	3	6	7
6	5	7	1	4	3	9	2	8
9	1	3	6	2	8	7	5	4
4	2	8	5	7	9	1	3	6
1	3	6	7	8	5	2	4	9
5	7	4	9	3	2	6	8	1
2	8	9	4	6	1	5	7	3

**DID YOU KNOW ... LET'S DISCUSS ON FACEBOOK**  
(Facebook page name: U.S. Mission to the African Union)

**(AFRICA'S FOOD INSECURITY)**

*Did you know that about 240 million people in Africa, or about one in every four people, lack adequate access to the food necessary for a healthy and active life. Additionally, over 70% of Africa's food insecure populations live in rural area. Ironically, smallholder farmers, who produce over 90% of the continent's food supply, make up the majority (about 50%) of the food insecure population in Africa.*

*The causes of Africa's food insecurity fall under two broad categories. The first category consists of natural causes, like locusts and natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions and drought. The second category is human induced, such as wars, deteriorating health systems, and unfriendly environmental practices. Moreover, three of the greatest challenges contributing to food insecurity include:*

*An underdeveloped agricultural sector: The majority of African farmers practice underdeveloped agriculture which is characterized by an over-reliance on primary agriculture, with the minimal use of external farm inputs, as well as inadequate food storage and preservation;*

*Barriers to market access: This is caused by poor road infrastructure, limited resources, lack of information, and poor government policies; and*

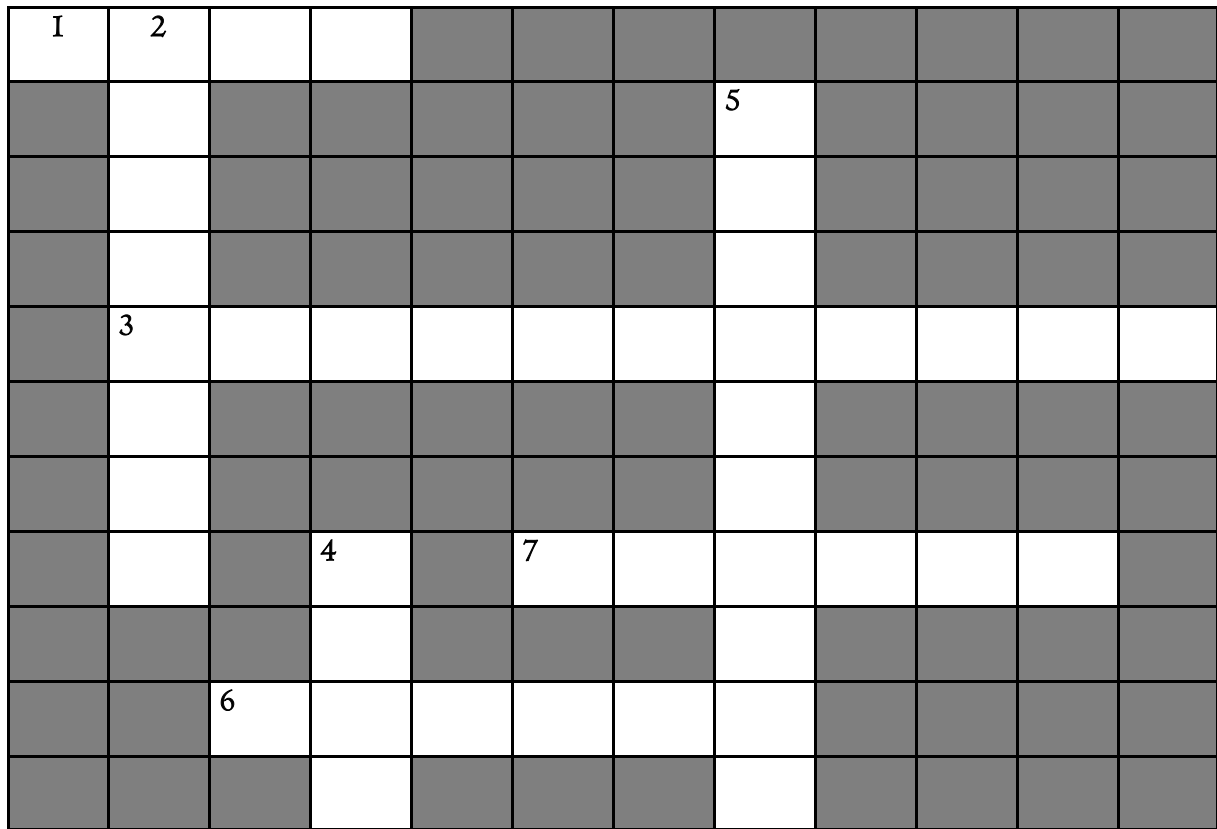
*Diseases: Diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS do not only reduce the human capital of a nation but they also increase the burden of a household in acquiring food.*

*Positive actions have been taken by African governments and food aid institutions to address this crisis on the continent. However, statistics still show that the number of underweight children has steadily increased since 2000.*

*Please share with us your comments on this topic on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Did-You-Know-Le-Saviez-Vous/181760325263595>) And Twitter: @US\_AU.*

*Disclaimer: This information has been obtained from various internet open sources.*

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## ACROSS

1. **Lack** – The state of being without or not having enough of something
3. **Underweight** – Below a weight considered normal or desirable
6. **Locust** – A species of short horned grasshoppers that subsequently become migratory and destroy crops during their migration.
7. **Farmer** – A person who cultivates crops and/or rears animals on a big piece of land

## DOWN

2. **Adequate** – Satisfactory or acceptable in quality and/or quality
4. **Food** – Any nutritious substance that people or animals eat or drink, in order to maintain life and growth
5. **Insecurity** – The state of being subject to danger or injury



## A WORD TO THE WISE



**Mr. Gregory W. Engle, Peace Corps  
Country Director Ethiopia**

Mr. Gregory W. Engle is the Peace Corps Country Director; we had the chance to talk with him on the link between Peace Corps programs, African youth, and the continent's development. This is what he had to say.

**The USAU Youth:** Thank you Mr. Engle for having us here today. Can you tell us how the Peace Corps program impacts the lives of African youth?

**Mr. Gregory Engle:** I think that its impact on youth -- in Africa and in other regions -- is perhaps the Peace Corps's greatest legacy.

Many Peace Corps projects in Africa are directed specifically at African youth, such as Education and Youth Development. Here in Ethiopia, we have an Education project that is aimed at improving the English teaching skills of Ethiopian primary school teachers. Our Peace Corps Volunteers interact both with the teachers and their pu-

pils, helping them to improve their English, but also providing many Ethiopian youth their first direct experience with a foreigner. Many of the topics and materials used by our Peace Corps Volunteers in the classroom and club settings expose these young Ethiopians to new ways of thinking about many of the challenges that youth around the world face.

Some Peace Corps projects are not specifically aimed at youth. Peace Corps's Health and Environment projects in Ethiopia include a broader target groups, but youth are beneficiaries, as well. The Volunteers in these projects very often develop activities that draw in local youth. These activities include English, Environment and HIV/AIDS Prevention clubs.

Peace Corps Volunteers from all three of our projects in Ethiopia -- Education, Health and Environment -- host summer camps every year, each of which brings together 30--40 Ethiopian teenagers for a week of team building exercises and lively discussions of topics relevant to today's youth: HIV/AIDS, health and hygiene, gender roles, and responsible environmental practices. Several of the students who participate in these camps go back to their own communities and establish school and civic clubs to draw local youth in to the discussion.

**The USAU Youth:** What do you think is the impact of these programs on the Continent's development?

**Mr. Gregory Engle:** The Peace Corps is first and foremost a people-to-people program. Our Volunteers live with and among the people whom they serve. They are primarily sharing skills and ways of doing things rather than development funds and physical resources. Therefore, the Volunteers' impact is at the grassroots level. They try to transfer knowledge and skills that will be useful to the communities in which they live, whether that's direct knowledge to students, better health and hygiene practices that mothers can implement in their homes, or environmentally sound farming, forestry and other agricultural techniques that local farmers can use to increase their food security while protecting their natural resources.

**The USAU Youth:** As you continue to mark 50 years of the Peace Corps program, what are some of your biggest accomplishments and where would you like to expand the program, as it relates to Africa and African youth.

**Mr. Gregory Engle:** Some of the very first Peace Corps Volunteers who arrived in Ethiopia 50 years ago taught many Ethiopians who are leaders in government, commerce, education and other fields of endeavor in Ethiopia today. This is certainly true in the many other African countries with Peace Corps programs, as well. Again, as a people-to-people program, Peace Corps doesn't have dams, roads and other capital projects to point to. What it leaves behind is human infrastructure: people with new skills and ways of doing things that they have learned from Volunteers. But as important as the specific skills and knowledge, especially among the youth, are the new ways of thinking about their world.

That the Peace Corps is going strong in Africa after 50 years is a tribute to the program's value, both to Africa and to the United States, which has learned much about Africa through the many Peace Corps Volunteers who have served on the continent. Currently, the Peace Corps is going through a process that it calls "Focus In/Train Up," under which Peace Corps Volunteers will be engaged in a smaller number of projects -- those of highest value to the host countries -- but with more extensive training and support. This should enhance their effectiveness. I hasten to add that this program will not reduce the total number of Volunteers in service, which should remain roughly as it is at present.

The Peace Corps program in Ethiopia has nearly doubled in the past year. Ethiopia is a large and influential African country and one that supports and values the work of the more than 200 Peace Corps Volunteers currently in country. It is appropriate, therefore, that this is now one of the largest Peace Corps programs in Africa.

**The USAU Youth:** At the end of each interview we have a question called "A Word to the Wise." What piece of advice can you give young Africans who want to listen and learn from you?

**Mr. Gregory Engle:** You must believe that your destiny is in your own hands and seek every opportunity to educate yourselves.

**The USAU Youth:** It has been our honor to talk to you today. Thank you.

**Mr. Gregory Engle:** You're welcome.



## THE VOICE OF VOLUNTEER LAWRENCE MULI



**Lawrence Muli**  
**AU Youth Volunteer**

Volunteerism has been a central tenet in the formation of my career goals and objectives, some can even say it has been inherited. My late father, who wished for a world where humanity and the environment were in perfect harmony, left behind a legacy that included teaching environmental conservation to rural communities in Eastern Kenya, as well as building an aesthetic up-country Green Farm. I grew up wondering what more could I do. What could I contribute that was different? Where could I scale up my efforts and go beyond just having an idea? All of this pondering, led to my first steps; moving from the son who admired my father's farm to the environmental student who desired more knowledge, in hopes of giving national and continental clout to the vision of a Green Farm.

From environmental and community development programs across Africa to policy advocacy and representation of Kenyan and other African youth within the United Nations international environmental frameworks at the UN Environment Programme and the UN Department of Public Information and Communication across the world, I have personally experienced the true value of volunteerism. Coupled with this, the youth volunteer experience at the AU Commission has been at the center of building my professional capacity, resulting in my acquisition of the competitive edge necessary to be accepted for my next level of studies at the University of London, where I will be pursuing a Master of Science in Public Policy and Management after the end of my volunteer deployment.

The AU Youth Volunteer Program has been key in making me a conscious African youth leader, bequeathing me with the principles of shared values, peace, and Pan-Africanism. Over my last year as a volunteer, the journey has been fruitful; equipping me with evidence-based, professional experiences that have given me the opportunity to grow my passion and shape my career path.

Over the past year, I have been able to complete the following:

- Scale up policy-level actions and youth engagement within the advocacy and communications agenda for environmental sustainability and climate change discussions, resulting in my service as the focal point for African youth attending the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development;
- Work to include a youth perspective on the common African Union position as well as consolidating the African Union Commission's (AUC) global discussions and interactions on behalf of Africa around the Green Economy negotiations;
- Assist in spearheading awareness and mobilization efforts on "Africa Deliver as One for Youth," including coordinating the media and communications framework of the Fourth Conference of Ministers of Youth in September 2012 (COMY IV), which envisaged a new paradigm for the use of new media tools and innovative communication;
- Spearhead the global discourse around youth development, including the UN Inter-Agency Framework on Youth as well as the 2011 and 2012 African Youth Day celebrations and the conceptualization and design

*"the sky is  
not the limit,  
I am my own*

- of the maiden Model African Union framework; and
- Involvement in developing synergy within Departments of the AUC, including setting up the first Inter-Departmental Working Group on Youth, which is key in consolidating ideas on youth issues as a cross-cutting area of the AUC mandate and support for the implementation of AU Summit Decisions and Declarations with bearing on youth. Within this framework, I have been able to spearhead the preparation of the "Youth Friendly AUC Report" that was consolidated from interviews and work from all Departments within the Commission, and is aimed at providing an analytic report on the activities of the AUC from a youth perspective.

I am glad the Youth Division at the AUC offered me the opportunity to learn and use my skills which, when coupled with my upcoming Masters program, will work well to create the necessary foundation for my aspirations of public office or political appointment within the Government of Kenya.

Ultimately, I live it and I love it. The altruism of volunteerism has further deepened my belief that, "the sky is not the limit, I am my own limit." The greatest investment we can make is in people, the youth, the leaders of today and tomorrow.

Thanks *USAU Youth* for giving me the chance to share my experience with my brothers and sisters in Africa and around the world.

Lawrence Muli  
AU Youth Volunteer  
Advocacy & Communications Associate  
Division of Youth Development and Capacity Building, HRST  
African Union Commission

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The USAU Youth is always interested to hear from you! Please send your articles, announcements, and information on any subject matter you would like to see in subsequent editions of the newsletter to [USAUyouth@state.gov](mailto:USAUyouth@state.gov), and please don't miss out on our monthly discussions on Facebook. Thank you.

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